

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

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DRAFTED BY USOAS:FMCNEIL:TETAYLOR:JD

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, OAS

SUBJECT: OASGA PROCEDURES

REFS: SAN JOSE 1103 AND 1140

1. THE GOVERNMENTS OF PANAMA AND COSTA RICA, IN SUCCESSIVE DEMARCHES, HAVE PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE PROCEDURES FOR THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHEREBY GENERAL DEBATE (THREE DAYS OF SET PIECE SPEECHES BY FOREIGN MINISTERS IN OPEN SESSION) WOULD BE ELIMINATED. THEY WOULD BE REPLACED BY INFORMAL QTE DIALOGUE UNQTE ON THE MAIN TOPICS OF THE AGENDA. (WE UNDERSTAND THESE INFORMAL SESSIONS WOULD BE IN PRIVATE.)

2. PANAMA PROPOSED QTE THE SO-CALLED GENERAL DEBATE BE CONVERTED INTO A DIALOGUE, IN WHICH THE CHIEFS OF DELEGATION TAKE NOTE OF ALL OF THE ITEMS ON THE AGENDA AND ADOPT THE IMPORTANT POLITICAL DECISIONS OF THE ORGANIZATION. UNQTE USOAS HAS INFORMED PANAMA'S
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OAS AMBASSADOR OF OUR SUPPORT.

3. COSTA RICA'S FOREIGN MINISTER FACIO HAS NOW SENT A QTE DEAR COLLEAGUE UNQTE LETTER TO EACH OAS FOREIGN MINISTER TERSELY DIAGNOSING THE ASSEMBLY'S ILLS, SUPPORTING PANAMA'S IDEA AND PROPOSING A FIVE-POINT PLAN TO IMPLEMENT IT. (REFS REPEATED TO ALL POSTS)

4. ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE INFORM FOREIGN MINISTER OR OTHER APPROPRIATE HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL SOONEST OF OUR SUPPORT FOR THE PANAMANIAN AND COSTA RICAN INITIATIVES TO MAKE THE INITIAL STAGE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY INTO A FORUM FOR PROBLEM SOLVING DIALOGUE. ALMOST EVERY FOREIGN MINISTER HAS EXPRESSED FRUSTRATION WITH THE ASSEMBLY FORMAT BECAUSE IT INHIBITS A FRANK EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON MAJOR ISSUES. THEY SAY THAT GENERAL DEBATE IS LARGELY A WASTE OF TIME, SINCE THE MINISTERS MUST MAKE SPEECHES FOR HOME CONSUMPTION. AS FACIO'S NOTE POINTS OUT, THE MINISTERS THEN LEAVE FOR HOME BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY REALLY COMES TO GRIPS WITH THE IMPORTANT ITEMS ON THE AGENDA. THE OAS SPECIAL COMMITTEE HAS DONE NOTHING TOWARDS REFORMING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ITSELF. THE PANAMANIAN/COSTA RICAN PROPOSALS PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SIGNIFICANT REFORM NOW.

5. WE HAVE HEARD COMMENT AMONG OAS AMBASSADORS HERE THAT THE PANAMANIAN PROPOSAL PRESUMES TO RESTRICT THE RIGHT OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS TO SELF-EXPRESSION. WE DO NOT THINK THIS IS THE CASE. THESE PROPOSALS PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR FOREIGN MINISTERS TO DISTRIBUTE TO DELEGATIONS AND THE PRESS A PREPARED STATEMENT OF NATIONAL VIEWS. MORE IMPORTANTLY, ONCE THE PRIVATE SESSIONS END, AGENDA ITEMS WOULD BE DEALT WITH BY PARLIAMENTARY PROCESS IN PUBLIC COMMITTEE AND PLENARY SESSIONS DURING WHICH THE MINISTERS, OR THEIR REPRESENTATIVES, WOULD OF COURSE SPEAK AS THEY SEE FIT. AS PANAMA AND COSTA RICA ARE SUGGESTING, THE DETAILS CAN BE LARGELY IRONED OUT BEFOREHAND IN THE PERMANENT COUNCIL, ACTING UNDER THE RUBRIC OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S PREPARATORY COMMITTEE. WE HOPE THAT OTHER OAS GOVERNMENTS WILL ALSO SUPPORT THE PANAMANIAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND COSTA RICAN INITIATIVES AND INSTRUCT THEIR REPRESENTATIVE TO THE PERMANENT COUNCIL TO WORK OUT A SUITABLE PLAN IN THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE.

6. FOR PANAMA CITY AND SAN JOSE: PLEASE INFORM FOREIGN MINISTERS TACK AND FACIO WE SUPPORT THEIR PROPOSAL TO CONVERT THE GENERAL DEBATE INTO A DIALOGUE AND OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THIS INSTRUCTION TO

EMBASSIES IN OTHER OAS COUNTRIES.

7. FOR BUENOS AIRES: IN INFORMING FOREIGN MINISTER
VIGNES, PLEASE MAKE CLEAR THAT OUR SUPPORT FOR UTILIZING
THE PROCEDURES OF THE DIALOGUE TO DEAL WITH THE MAJOR
ISSUES AT THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IS NOT REPEAT NOT
LINKED IN ANY WAY WITH THE QUESTION OF WHETHER TO
RESCHEDULE THE BUENOS AIRES MFM. INGERSOLL

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